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COMMUNICATION

THE POLICE SYSTEM OF LONDON

The police system of London is probably the most satisfactory feature in its government. A foreigner who is asked for his impression of our city usually commences with an encomium on the London policeman. The typical policeman is a well set-up fellow, of no great intelligence, but with a good deal of common sense; he is invaluable in regulating the stream, or rather the torrent, of traffic down our busy streets; he is useful when one wants to find one's way about and I have known his advice asked and accepted even on such points as the best theater to go to or the nearest dentist.

A closer study of London policemen will reveal a slight point of difference; it is in the cuff on the sleeve of their uniforms and you learn that the red and white cuff is the mark of the city policeman, while the blue and white cuff is the badge of a member of the Metropolitan Police Force. You have come across another example of the dual system which pervades London Government; that which centers round "the City," the historic London and that which concerns itself with the far greater area of the rest of the metropolis. We must consider each separately.

The Metropolitan Police Force was created in 1829 by public statute. The Metropolitan Police District established thereby embraces the whole of what is now the County of London and any part of any parish or place within 15 miles of Charing Cross which the Crown with the advice of the Privy Council may be pleased to include. An Order in Council issued in 1840 included parishes in Middlesex, Surrey, Kent, Essex and Hertfordshire. The size of the area is 688 square miles. Besides this district, the jurisdiction of the body we are considering extends to the Royal palaces, His Majesty's Dockyards and stations and the River Thames. The government of the police force throughout the rest of the country is in local hands. In the Metropolis, however, it is removed from all local control and is administered through the Home Office. The chief official is the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, who is appointed by the Crown by warrant under the Sign Manual. He possesses very extensive powers under the provisions of the different Police Acts. From time to time he makes and issues police orders and regulations which are subject to the approval of the Secretary of State. He may suspend or dismiss any member of the force. He is empowered to make regulations as to dogs not under control—such for instance as the famous "Muzzling Order" of Sir Charles Warren. He has also a large number of miscellaneous duties to perform, such as that of licensing chimney-sweepers, pedlars and hackney and stage carriages and their drivers. Though he is appointed a Justice of the Peace for Middlesex, Surrey, Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, he is not permitted to sit in quarter or general sessions except for purposes immediately connected with his office. He may not sit in the House of Commons during his

term of office or for six months after its expiration, and, though he may vote at an election, he must not exercise his influence in favor of a candidate for a constituency in any county in which he is authorized to act. He receives a salary of £2000 a year and is assisted by three Assistant Commissioners appointed in the same way and subject to the same disqualifications. There is a further officer known as the Receiver who acts as Trustee and Treasurer. He receives all payments and pays all outgoings; he enters into contracts and holds property. For this purpose he is a corporation sole with perpetual succession. The Head office of the Metropolitan Police is in Scotland Yard.

Constables are enrolled by the Commissioners under the authority and to a number approved by the Home Secretary. Besides their ordinary common-law powers, they have numerous special duties and to possess the right of executing in any part of England without endorsement, a warrant issued by a metropolitan police magistrate. On certain terms, additional constables may be appointed at the cost of the individuals who want them. Constables are exempt from serving on juries or in the militia. They are conveyed at a reduced rate by the railway companies. Until 1887 they had no vote at Parliamentary elections. In that year, however, they were given the franchise. Moreover, a constable who is prevented by his duty from voting at his own polling station is entitled to do so at any other, on a production of a certificate from the chief constable.

The City Police is regulated by a number of Private Acts commencing with one passed in the year 1839. Its jurisdiction is limited to the City of London, which, though only of an area of 671 acres, forms the heart of the whole metropolis. The City Police, like the Metropolitan Police Force, is under the command of a Commissioner; but he is appointed by the Common Council of the city subject to the approval of the Crown. He can be removed for misconduct by the Crown or by the Court of Aldermen. He sees to the organization of the force, the appointment and dismissal of constables and the regulation of traffic. In these matters, however, he acts subject to the regulations of the Court of Aldermen and the Home Secretary. There is also a Police Committee of the Common Council, the most important duties of which are the fixing of the numbers of the force, the providing of police stations and the apportionment of police rates to the different wards.

The Metropolitan Police and the City Police are thus quite distinct entities. Yet it has been enacted that with a view to combination in times of emergency, the Metropolitan Police may be authorized by a Secretary of State at the request of the Lord Mayor to act in the city under their own officers, and vice versa.

We have now to consider the number and cost of the police force in the two areas. Fortunately for our purpose the financial report of the Metropolitan Police and the annual report of the Police Committee of the City Corporation have been issued quite recently.

The Metropolitan Police Force numbers 16,000 men. Their distribution and pay on January 1, 1904 were as follows:

Chief Constables	5	£600 to £800
Superintendents	30	320 to 495
Inspectors	513	132 to 394
Sergeants	2,101	94 to 158
Constables	13,868	66 to 92
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Total	16,517	

The population of this area is between six and seven millions. Taking it at 6,500,000, we find that there is approximately 1 policeman to every 400 inhabitants. One-fourteenth of this number, however, are on leave every day in accordance with the regulation granting one day's leave of absence in a fortnight to every man. The total ordinary expenditure for last year was £2,200,000, which on the same basis of population makes the cost just under £6 8d. per head. In reality, however, the rate-payers contribute barely half of that amount. The police rate is limited by a Statute of the year 1868 to 9d. in the £, and of this 5d. is borne by the rates and 4d. is contributed by the Government out of the Local Taxation Account. Thus for the year ending March 31, 1904, £800,000 came from the rates and almost exactly £1,000,000 from the Government. The balance was made up from miscellaneous sources, such as fines at the Metropolitan Police Courts, which yielded £50,000 and licenses for the proprietors, drivers and conductors of public carriages, which amounted to £40,000.

The authorized strength for the city police for public service, as stated in the last report, was 1002 of all ranks. Fifty-six more were employed on private service. The immense disproportion between the day and the night population of the city may be realized from the fact that, whilst there is one policeman for every 333 of the day inhabitants (as compared with 1 in about 400 in the Metropolitan District), there is 1 policeman for every 27 of the night population. On the latter basis the average cost per inhabitant was £4 4s. 10d. The total cost of the force for last year was £174,000 of which £122,000 was contributed from rates on the different wards and £40,263 from the resources of the corporation. The value of the property reported as stolen during the year was £20,000, of which 27 per cent. was subsequently recovered. Seventy-nine candidates for admission into the force were examined during the year. Sixty-four of these were accepted and 15 were rejected.

The entire cost of the police force throughout the whole of London is thus £2,374,000 and the total number of men is nearly 18,000. Although for seventeen years policemen have been able to vote at elections, it cannot be said that as a body they have any political influence. Nor do questions relating to police management form any plank in election platforms. Londoners as a whole are well satisfied with the existing system. The London County Council have been suspected at times of harboring the design of acquiring the control of the police. Such a step, however, would meet with an immense amount of opposition in the Metropolis and it is most unlikely that, at least for many years to come, a Government will be found to ask Parliament to sanction it. On the other hand the separate administration of the Metropolitan and City Police is generally

felt to be anomalous and inconvenient; and in this respect it is possible that a reform may be introduced at no distant date.

HERBERT M. ADLER,
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